

Psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students: In the case of Hosanna Primary School, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Parents provide emotional, physical and economic aid to their members of families. The aim of study was to examine the psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students in vision primary school. The target population of the study was 87 boys and 82 girls totally 169 students were selected as sample participants by using purposive sampling techniques. The five-point Likert questionnaires were used, descriptive statistics like frequency, table and percentage to examine the effect of psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students. The result revealed that students from single parenthood face psychosocial problems due to the absence of one parent by death or divorce that create more problems for these students. Also, students from single parent face psychological problems like low self-esteem, loneliness and high depression, negative attitudes about themselves and hopelessness about their future life. Finally, the study suggested that the concerned bodies should play a great role in teaching and counseling therapy.

Keywords: Psychosocial, challenges, single parenthood, students, Ethiopia.

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1. Introduction

In the human context, family is the system in which there is a relationship in response to changing needs and concerns of family members within large societies (Van Geert, 2020). The concept of family has changed from the large extended family to a smaller unit of the nuclear family in nowadays will probably be broken (Sharma, 2013). Therefore, transition in the family structure will lead children to psychological tension and physical, psychological and social wellbeing problems (Kelly & Emery, 2004).

Parents provide emotional, physical and economic aid to their members of families. Ideally, such families are characterised by intimacy in tenacity continuity and commitment among the members (Favez, Frascarolo & Tissot, 2017). In line with the above idea, human development cannot be properly understood without considering the importance of parental support to their children's development (Lidz, 2003). Therefore, happy mothers who have a close relationship with their husbands tend to interact much more patiently and sensitivity with their infants than mothers who experience marital sensation and raising their children on their own without the support of others (Cox & Paley, 2003). Meanwhile, parents direct or indirect relationships with their children's play an important role in children's development especially, when two parents took frequently in nurturing their children simultaneously (Belsky, Gilstrap & Rovine, 1984).

According to Belsky, Gilstrap and Rovine (1984) there are different types of families in the world such as a nuclear family consists of a mother, a father, and a first-born child. Second, an extended family consists of parents and their children's lives with other kin some combination of grandparents, aunts, uncle's nieces and nephews. Similarly, extended families are common in many cultures of the world and among Africa, America in United States (Allison, 2000; Ruggles, 2009). Third, reconstituted family that involves at least one child his or her biological parent and step parent and that often blended multiple children from two families in new (widowhood) and long-term separation because of lack of concrete and emotional support in faith of socio-economic situations makes them single parent role as an individual one.

Family plays a great role in shaping the psychological and social adjustment of children's but children's face problems like family structural change (Hetherington & Parke, 2002). Children's and students from single parenthood families face significant psychological and social problems like low self-esteem and social dissatisfaction among the communities. Also, a child's who are living with only one parent face highly problem than students who live with their both parents. This is more prevalent in children's than parents. Most of the time, females have a higher psychological problem than males when they living in single parenthood. Therefore, the complete psychological and social development of children's is fulfilled by both parents otherwise; children face not only psychosocial but also academic achievement problems (Joan & Michael, 2005). On the other hand, children and students who live with two biological parents have a better psychological and social adjustment in society (Robert, 2001).

A single parent is the cause of divorce, death and long-term separation. Children from non-intact families are poor in their self-esteem, emotional, social interaction and satisfaction with their work. From this, we can understand that non-intact family's especially single parents have poor psychosocial problems. So, family problems are seams as both affecting and being affected by how the family interacts as a whole (Kelly & Emery, 2004).

Furthermore, marital dissolution leads to psychosocial problems due to lack of adequate adjustment, managing income and caring of responsibility in the family. The problems are likely depression, low self-esteem, low social interaction and others (Joan & Michael, 2005). Generally, single parenthood comes as a result of divorce or death, as social devised means of dealing with marriage failure. Divorce has great consequences with regard to family institutions. As the result, many children manifest some behaviours disruption and emotional problems following their parent divorce and such as shyness, depression and low self-esteem (Golden, 2007). Therefore, the effect of

divorce on children's emotional wellbeing depends on many different factors including the qualities of care they receive before divorce and the nature of divorce itself. The negative feeling of the parent towards each other more likely harms children's emotion (Julian & McCall, 2016).

The influence of family especially in single parenthood structure is not well understood in Ethiopia. However, so far there is no study in which particularly on examining the psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students. The present researcher could not find any research done regarding the psychosocial challenges of single parenthood among students to be cited in the Ethiopian context particularly in Wachemo secondary school. Furthermore, when the researcher was provided volunteer service of guidance and counseling office at Wachemo secondary school, the practitioner has observed how psychosocial challenges affect single parenthood students. In addition, the practitioner observed that less attention is given to the effect of psychosocial problems on single parenthood students. This personal experience greatly consolidated the investigator to search whether or not the case reveals in other areas. Therefore, the researcher thought that examining the psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students. So, the problem was guided by the following basic research questions.

The influence of family especially in single parenthood structure is not well understood in Ethiopia. It is within this context stressing the overriding importance of the issue that our knowledge of single parent family structure and its impact on the student must be set for this reason. The focus of the research is to examine the psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students and find out a solution to the problem in Hosanna vision primary school. It is hoped that this study will be begun to answer the question and to fill the gaps in our knowledge about the problem of students living in single parenthood and other studies were not sufficiently conducted in satisfactory way. Therefore, the problem was guided by the following basic research questions.

- What are the main causes of psychosocial problem and effects of family structure among single parenthood students?
- What are the psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students?
- How to examine the self-esteem of single parenthood of student?

1.1. Purpose of the study

The importance of the study was to generate knowledge about single parenthood children's psychosocial problems and to understand good parental adjustment on children's psychosocial development.

2. Methods and materials

The primary objective of the study was to examine the psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students in Wachemo secondary school. In order to achieve this objective descriptive survey method was employed to examine the effect of psychosocial challenge of single parenthood students.

2.1. Subjects and techniques

The target population of the study was 300 Wachemo secondary school grade 9 and 10 students. The study was conducted in Wachemo secondary school which is found in southern regional state located approximately 230 km southern part of Addis Ababa located in Hosanna town. To meet this objective, the researcher drew 169 out of 300 students were selected as sample participants of the study by using purposive sampling techniques to get data directly from the participants.

2.2. Instruments and data collection procedure

The data collection tools were five-point Likert questionnaires. The questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection by including respondent's sociodemographic information, psychosocial, emotional and self-esteem measurement scales to examine the effect of psychosocial challenge of single parenthood students (Simons, Whitbeck, Conger & Wu, 1991). Then, the data collection procedure is first of all; getting a letter from the department of psychology the researcher (student practitioner) then forward to the concerned bodies and then asks the counsellor for getting assistance and goes to the colonel to get permission to conduct a research.

2.3. Study variables

The predictable variables are age, sex and family status in school to examine the effect of psychosocial challenge of single parenthood students.

2.4. Method of data analysis

Finally, the collected data processed and analysed concurrently by using descriptive statistical techniques quantitatively. Specifically, percentage, table and frequency techniques were used to analyse those compute data.

3. Results

Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the students

Category	Attributes	Respondents	
Sex	<i>F</i>		%
	Male	87	51.1
	Female	82	48.5
	Total	169	100
Age	11–16	93	55
	13–16	76	44.9
	Total	169	100

This table demonstrates the sociodemographic characteristics of students. $N = 300$ ($n = 169$ for each condition). Participants were male and female students and on average ≤ 16 years of age (own survey, 2019).

Table 1 shows 169 sample respondents participated in the study. Among these, 87 (51.1%) of the participants were male and 82 (48.5%) were female students. So, the majority of the respondents were male students in the class. Of the total respondents, 93 (55%) of students were found between the age between 11 and 13 years and 76 (44.9) of the respondents were found between the age of 13–16 years old. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were from 11 to 13 age groups.

3.1. Causes of psychosocial problems and effects of family structure on students

Table 2. Main causes and effects family structure among students

Category	Attributes	Respondents	
Now whom you are living with	<i>F</i>		%
	Mother	87	51.5
	Father	70	41.4
	With others	12	7.1
	Total	169	100

Why do you live with your single parenthood	Death	67	39.6
	Divorce	89	52.6
	Job	0	0
	I don't know	13	7.7
	Total	169	100

Table 2 indicates that out of the total respondents of 87 (51.5) of the respondents were living with mother, 70 (41.5%) of the respondents were living with their father and 12 (7.1%) of the respondents were living with other relatives. Generally, the majority of respondents were living with their mothers. Regarding the reasons for living with single parenthood, 67 (39.6%) of the respondents parents had died, 89 (52.6%) of the respondents parents divorced and 13 (7.7%) of the respondents did not know the reason behind their having a single parent. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were living with single parenthood due to divorce and death, respectively.

3.2. The psychological status of single parenthood student's

Table 3. The psychological challenges of single parenthood student's

No	Items	Responses								Total	
		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		n	%
1	I am involved social activity	20	12	61	36	79	47	9	5	169	100
2	I have intimate relationship with class mate	16	9	74	44	79	47	-	-	169	100
3	I have many friends in school	19	11	79	47	64	38	7	4	169	100
4	I have my social life with in school	17	10	67	40	74	44	11	6	169	100
5	I feel confidence in my education	10	6	69	41	69	41	21	12	169	100
6	I am always happy in my life	43	25	19	11	29	17	78	46	169	100
7	I feel hope full about future	22	13	43	25	31	18	73	43	169	100
8	Usually bothered by thing do not bothered	19	11	72	43	14	8	64	38	169	100
9	I don't like to participate in social activity	11	6	22	13	72	43	64	38	169	100

As Table 3 shows that the respondents were involving in social activity strongly agree 20 (12%), agree 61 (36%), disagree 79 (47%) and strongly disagree 9 (5%). Hence, the majority of the respondents they do not involving in social activities.

Regarding on relationship with class mates, 16 (9%) of the respondents strongly agree, 74 (44%) respondents agree and they had highly intimate relationship with class mates, 79 (47%) strongly disagree and they had low intimate relation with their class mates. Therefore, the majority of the respondents they had intimate relationship with class mates.

Regarding close friends within school 19 (11%) of the respondents strongly agree and they have many friends in school, 74 (47%) of the respondents agree that they have many friends in the school, 64 (38%) of respondents disagree, 7 (4%) of the respondents strongly disagree. Therefore, the majority of the respondents had close friends within school.

Regarding social life within school, 17 (10%) of the respondents had been strongly agree, 673 (40%) of the respondents agree were that they had social life in school, 74 (44%) of the respondents disagree, 11 (6%) of the respondents strongly disagree that they had a social life. This shows that students were not interested in social life in school.

Regarding their confidence in education, 10 (6%) of the respondents strongly agree and they were confident in their education, 69 (41%) of the respondents agree, 69 (41%) of the respondents disagree and 21 (12%) the respondents strongly disagree. Therefore, the majority of the respondents are not confident in their education.

Regarding too happiness of their life, 43 of the respondents (25%) strongly agree that they were happy in their life, 19 (11%) of the respondents agree, 29 (17%) of the respondents disagree and other 78 (47%) of the respondents strongly disagree on happiness. Hence, the majority of the respondents had a problem of sadness and withdrawal.

Regarding hopefulness about the future, 22 (13%) strongly agree about hoping for the future, 43 (25%) of the respondent agree on the hope of the future, 31 (18%) disagree and other, 73 (43%) of the respondents strongly disagree. Thus, the majority of the respondents were not having hopeful about the future.

Regarding bothering on things 19 (11%) of the respondents strongly agree, 72 (43%) of the respondents agree, 14 (8%) of the respondents disagree, 64 (38%) of the respondents strongly disagree, and majority of the respondents were bothered about things elsewhere.

Regarding participation in social activities, 11 (6%) of the respondents strongly agree, 22 (13%) of respondents agree, 72 (43%) respondents disagree and 64 (38%) respondents strongly disagree. Therefore, the majority of the respondents do not like to participate in social activity.

4. State of respondents

Table 4. Students emotional distress information

No	Items	Responses Alternatives								Total	
		Stronglyagree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		n	Total
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	Total
1	I feel sad and withdrawal	74	44	27	16	56	33	12	7	169	100
2	I easily become aggressive	64	38	72	43	21	12	12	7	169	100
3	I do not want to be left alone	63	37	13	7	26	15	69	41	169	100
4	I do not like to talk about my parent	26	15	26	15	43	25	74	44	169	100
5	I feel loneliness	56	33	79	47	19	11	15	9	169	100
6	I am shy and difficult to talk with many people around	29	17	29	17	39	23	72	43	169	100
7	I find it hard to talk someone I do not know usually	56	33	18	11	74	44	21	12	169	100
8	I get worry without any reason	76	45	59	35	17	10	17	10	169	100

Table 4 indicated that in relation to feeling of sadness and withdrawal, 74 (44%) of the respondent strongly agree that they were sad and withdrawn, 27 (16%) of the respondents agree that they were sad and withdrawn, 56 (33%) disagree and other 12 (7%) strongly disagree. Therefore, the majority of the respondents felt sad and withdrawn.

Regarding being aggressive, 64 (38%) of the respondents strongly agree, 72 (43%) of the respondents agree, 21 (12%) of the respondents disagree and 12 (7%) strongly disagree. This indicates that the majority of the respondents were aggressive.

Regarding on wanting to be left alone, 63 (37%) of the respondents strongly agree, 13 (7%) of the respondents agree, 26 (15%) of the respondents disagree and other 69 (41%) of respondents strongly disagree that did not want to live alone. Therefore, the majority of the respondents need to live alone.

Regarding talking about their parents, 26 (15%) of the respondents both strongly agree and agree they did not think about their parents, 43 (25%) disagree and 74 (44%) strongly disagree. Therefore, the majority of the respondents were not interested in thinking about their parents.

Regarding feeling lonely, 56 (33%) of them strongly agree that they felt loneliness, 79 (47%) agree that they felt loneliness, 19 (11%) of the respondents disagree and 15 (9%) of the respondents strongly disagree that they did not feel loneliness. The majority of the respondents did not feel loneliness.

Regarding shyness, 29 (17%) of the respondents both strongly agree and agree that they were shy, 3 (23%) disagree and 72 (43%) strongly disagree. It shows that the majority of the respondents were not shy.

Regarding communication with unusual person, 56 (33%) of the respondents strongly agree, 18 (11%) of the respondents agree that they did not communicate, 74 (44%) of the respondents disagree that they communicate with unusual persons, 21 (12%) of the respondents strongly disagree that means they were communicative with every person. Therefore, the majority of the respondents communicate with unusual persons.

Regarding respondents worrying without any reason, 76 (45%) of the respondents strongly agree, 59 (35%) of the respondents agree, 17 (10%) of the respondents both disagree and strongly disagree. So, the majority of respondents worry without any reason.

5. State of students' self-esteem

Table 5. Students' state of self-esteem information

No	Items	Responses									
		Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	I like myself just the way I am	28	17	31	18	43	25	67	40	169	100
2	I have a life of good quality	11	7	10	6	79	47	69	41	169	100
3	I have a lot of to be proud of	69	41	20	12	16	9	64	38	169	100
4	I am just as good as other people	82	49	64	38	11	6	12	7	169	100
5	I have positive relation with my parent	43	25	14	8	84	50	28	17	169	100
6	I feel emotionally close to my parent	43	25	33	20	82	48	11	7	169	100
7	I feel my parent care for me very much	89	53	65	36	4	2	11	7	169	100
8	I feel that I have failure in my life	76	45	43	25	43	25	7	4	169	100
9	I feel satisfaction in my life	62	37	10	6	20	12	77	45	169	100
10	I can't do anything without other	34	20	40	24	47	28	48	28	169	100

As shown in Table 5 that shows the item of accepting oneself just the way, 28 (17%) of the respondents strongly agree, 31 (18%) of the respondents agree, 43 (25%) of the respondent disagree and 67 (40%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of respondents did not like themselves.

Regarding living better life, 11 (7%) of the respondent strongly agree, 10 (6%) of the respondent agree, 79 (47%) of the respondents disagree and 69 (41%) of the respondents strongly disagree. Therefore, the majority of respondents do not have a good quality of life.

Regarding feeling proud of themselves, 69 (41%) of the respondents strongly agree, 20 (12%) of the respondents agree, 16 (9%) of the respondents disagree and 64 (38%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents are not prodding themselves.

Regarding behaving in a good way like others people 82 (49%) of the respondents strongly agree, 64 (38%) of the respondents agree, 11 (6%) of the respondents disagree and 12 (7%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of respondents were good like other people.

According to an intimate relationship with family 43 (25%) of respondents strongly agree, 14 (8%) of the respondents agree, 84 (50%) of the respondents disagree and 28 (17%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents are not close with their parents.

Regarding the respondents of emotionally closed to the parent 43 (25%) of the respondents strongly agree, 33 (20%) of the respondent agree, 82 (48%) of the respondents disagree and 11 (7%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of respondents are they were not close with their parent.

According to the respondents of feeling of failure in their life, 89 (53%) of the respondent strongly agree, 43 (25%) of the respondents agree, 43 (25%) of the respondents disagree and 7 (4%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents had a failure in their life.

Regarding parent caring very much, 76 (45%) of respondents strongly agree, 43 (25%) of the respondents agree, 43 (25%) of the respondents disagree and 7 (4%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents said their parents cared very much. Regarding the question of satisfaction in their life, 62 (37%) of the respondents strongly agree, 10 (6%) of the respondents agree, 20 (12%) of the respondents disagree and the remaining 77 (45%) of the respondents strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents said that they were not satisfied in their life.

Regarding the question of how dependent are the respondents on others to do anything, 34 (20%) of the respondents strongly agree, 40 (24%) of the respondents agree and 47 (28%) of the respondents both disagree and strongly disagree. The majority of the respondents said they did not do anything without other persons' support.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study were discussed in light of findings of previous studies and possible explanations collected through the questionnaire.

6.1. Causes of psychosocial problems and effects of family structure on students

One of the objectives of the present study was to examine the main causes of psychological problems and the effects of family structure among single parenthood students in vision primary school in Hosanna town. To do this, percentages and frequencies were employed in the form of Likert scale questionnaire. Therefore, the result indicated that the main causes of psychological problems of single parenthood students were divorce and death. Also, the main effects of family structure were living with one parent.

6.2. The psychosocial challenges of single parenthood student's

One of the objectives of the present study was to examine the effect of psychosocial challenges of single parenthood students in vision primary school in hosanna town. To do this, percentages and frequencies were employed in the form of Likert scale questionnaire. The results revealed that the psychological challenges that single parenthood student face many problems like self-esteem problem and less social interaction. Psychologically, depressed students experience bothering (worry) unhappiness and they find it hard to talk with someone they do not know more. Under self-esteem, students were dependents and less confident as they experience failure in their lives and at times they have negative attitudes even towards themselves. Similarly, previous studies indicated that children from non-intact family have low self-esteem, experience depression and poor social interaction (Kelly

& Emery, 2004). They also explained that students from single parenthood face psychological challenges mostly due to economic stress that makes single parenthood role a difficult one. When single parent is economically poor, they are more likely to keep worrying about the life situation, depression and lack of the consistent the previous study. In addition, Joan & Michael (2005) suggested that lack of concrete emotional support in the family leads to several socioeconomic stresses combine to make the single parent role an individual role.

Socially, the results revealed that the social challenges of single parenthood students face low communication with their parents, low acceptance and low sociable than intact family students, they possess low emotional intelligence to understand others feelings or interests and experience loneliness. In contrary, previous studies indicated that mother–child interaction seems to be the most important factor for the development of good attachment otherwise the infant face in juvenile delinquency, less affection, poorly sociable and low in participation with each other (Bowlby & Ainsworth, 1992).

7. Students state of self-esteem

One of the objectives of the present study was to examine the status of single parenthood students' self-esteem in vision primary school in Hosanna town. To do this, percentages and frequencies were employed in the form of Likert scale questionnaire. The results revealed that the.

8. Conclusions

Basically, this study tried to *examine the psychosocial challenges of students in single parenthood* in Hosanna vision school. Based on the findings, students of singleparenthood face psychological and social problems due to the absence of the parents living together. Students of single parenthood faces low self-esteem and social interaction problems like loneliness, low emotional intelligence, high depression, negative attitude about themselves and hopelessness about their future life. Finally, single parenthood students face different problems due to the separation of their parents as a result of divorce.

9. Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The school should focus on establishing guidance and counseling service in fostering self-esteem of the students
2. The government should play a great role in teaching parent about the negative side effects of divorce.
3. Giving family counseling play a great role in teaching the community and should takes necessary counseling service to those who are single parent children and student.
4. The government also create comfortable situation to the single parenthood children and students, children from the absence of one parent.
5. Non-government organisation should take responsibility to that single parent family structure.
6. In general, all the concerned bodies should play great role in teaching, counseling therapy by preparing the material and comfortable situation to that single parenthood student and to improve their psychological and social condition.

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